

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, September 9, 2011

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From the R.I. Department of Education (RIDE):

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PBS [LearningMedia network](#) open to all Rhode Island educators, students

Other:

Attachments to this field memo:

Action Item Calendar

September 16: Deadline for nominations for Rhode Island Teacher of the Year
September 16: Evaluators template due
September 23: Erate funding forms due
September 23: District testing schedules due
November 15: Deadline for final selections of District Teachers of the Year

Notes from Commissioner Gist:

Streamlined Teacher of the Year application posted

Though the official Teacher of the Year application deadline is a week from today (Friday, September 16), as I have noted to you in previous field memos we have developed a streamlined application and extended the deadline to November 15 in order to enable all districts to select a District 2012 Teacher of the Year. (Only those district candidates meeting the September 16 deadline will be eligible for selection as Rhode Island Teacher of the Year.) The Teacher of the Year program is an excellent way for all school districts and school leaders in Rhode Island to honor

some of our best teachers for the excellent work they do in our classrooms every day. We plan to hold a ceremony in the spring to recognize our distinguished educators of 2012, and I certainly hope that every district in the state can participate. We have posted the streamlined application form on our Web site:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/Recognition/default.aspx>

Districts preparing for NECAP testing

The NECAP testing window this year is October 3 – 25. All testing—including accommodations and make-up testing—*must* be completed by October 25. As noted below in a message from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum, in planning your assessment schedule you should take every effort to avoid religious holidays and local events that may impact students' ability to participate. It is important that you allow ample time for make-up test sessions for those students who are absent for any reason (including absences for religious holidays) during regularly scheduled testing dates.

Principals and test coordinators are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all eligible students are tested. Therefore, you and your staff members must:

- ensure that parents and guardians are aware of the purpose of the assessment and that they have access to your NECAP testing schedule in advance so that they can plan accordingly;
- strongly discourage parents and guardians from planning any vacations or other activities that would prevent their

- children from testing with their peers during scheduled test-administration days;
- ensure that parents and guardians are aware that their children must make up any testing they missed while absent and that all make-up testing must be completed no later than October 25; and
 - encourage parents and guardians to contact the principal, test coordinator, or teacher if their children will be absent during testing so that schools can arrange for make-up testing.

I am confident that our NECAP assessments will proceed smoothly across the state this year. During the testing period, let's encourage our students to get plenty of rest, to eat a good breakfast on the day of testing, and to perform at their very best so that we all can take pride in the accomplishments of our students and their teachers!

(More information on NECAP testing administration below)

Race to the Top Update on the Collaborative Learning for Outcomes Gap Analysis Sessions

In preparation for the launch of the Collaborative Learning for Outcomes (CLOs) networks this fall, RIDE has been conducting implementation capacity gap-analysis sessions with every LEA participating in Race to the Top (RTTT). The purpose of the gap-analysis sessions is to analyze district readiness to implement the RTTT projects that are rolling out this coming school year, focusing on study of the standards and transition to the Common Core. We have completed 21 gap analysis sessions at this point. Many thanks to all of the district teams we have met with so far—we have been learning so much about the challenges and successes across the state and truly appreciate everyone's time

and engagement in this work. We will continue to reach out to schedule gap-analysis sessions with the remaining LEAs. For more information about scheduling the gap-analysis sessions, please contact Elaine Budish, at 222-8436 or elaine.budish@ride.ri.gov.

We will also be reaching out to district RTTT coordinators over the next month to confirm logistics for the launch of the CLO network meetings that begin in mid-October. As a reminder, the LEA groupings and calendar for the CLO process are also [posted](#) on our Web site.

From RIDE:

RIDE sets hearing dates for proposed regulations on Certification Redesign

Please see the following message from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

The Board of Regents will conduct three public hearings to receive comment on the proposed regulations for Certification Redesign. These hearings are joint public hearings in conjunction with the Certification Policy Advisor Board (CPAB). RIDE welcomes all interested individuals to review the proposed regulations at the following link

(<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/CertificationRedesign/Default.aspx>) and to attend these public hearings to provide feedback. The schedule for the public hearings is detailed in the chart below.

September 13, 2011	Providence Career & Technical Academy	Auditorium
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5:00 PM	41 Fricker Street Providence, RI 02903	
September 21, 2011 5:00 PM	CCRI Warwick – Knight Campus 400 East Avenue Warwick, RI 02886	Bobby Hackett Theater
September 22, 2011 5:00 PM	CCRI Newport – Newport County Campus One John H. Chafee Blvd. Newport, RI 02840	Auditorium #134

Educator Evaluation Update and Action Item

Please see the following message from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Teacher Guidebooks are coming! The printing has been delayed from our original goal of delivery to you in August, but we are still planning to begin delivery of the teacher guidebooks in September. If you have any questions, please email edeval@ride.ri.gov. (In the meantime, you can view them online at www.corestandards.org.)

Intermediary Service Provider (ISP) assignments are in process. We will be contacting you directly with assignments and ISP training dates.

Reminders:

Please continue to register for training sessions.

Many of you have received Excel spreadsheets requesting a list of district identified evaluators. This list will help us determine who needs to attend training. Attendance data will be provided to you as we compile it. **Please return this information to Tim.heavey@ride.ri.gov by Friday, September 16.**

Thank you for your commitment to the educator evaluation and support work. We are enjoying our conversations with principals and others as they plan for the year.

Induction Update

Please see the following message from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Induction coaches have begun their work with beginning teachers and we are receiving wonderful feedback from both the Induction Coaches and the schools that they are working in. We appreciate your patience as their caseloads change. Districts are still hiring teachers and filling out their information for Induction Coach Assignments. You will find that some Induction Coaches at the secondary level are supporting beginning teachers who are certified in different content areas. They will be working on pedagogy, and other areas of support with beginning teachers as well as networking with department heads, teachers certified in the beginning teachers content area within the school district or outside the district if there is not a content teacher within the school/district.

Our sessions are filling for both the beginning teacher orientation as well as the Role of the Principal Training. New Teacher Center has identified Charles Hill as the leadership person to present at the Role of the Principal Training along with Jan Miles and Fred Williams. The training should provide many answers to principals who have beginning teachers in their buildings supported by Induction Coaches.

The new dates for Beginning Teacher Orientation for Induction will be September 14th and September 28th. These sessions will be held from 4:30-7:30 PM at the Sheraton Providence Airport Hotel in Warwick. Beginning Teachers need to only attend one of these sessions. To register, Beginning Teachers can go to:
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>.
Registration is required as we need accurate counts for handouts.

As always, if you have any questions or feedback, do not hesitate to contact Hilda or Donna:

Hilda Potrzeba at hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov or 401-222-8891

Donna Okrasinski at donna.okrasinski@ride.ri.gov or 401-222-8982

RIDE requests district testing schedules by September 23 - *Action item!*

Please see the following message from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

During the fall NECAP testing window (October 3 - 25), RIDE staff members will once again be visiting a random selection of schools across the state to observe the administration of the NECAP tests. These visits are necessary so that we can continue to improve the NECAP testing program for test coordinators, test administrators, and students and also so that we can monitor whether proper testing procedures and guidelines are being followed in school classrooms.

New this year will be the “NECAP Monitoring Visits Interview Questions” for test administrators/teachers, for school test coordinators/principals, and for district test coordinators. We strongly encourage all districts and schools to download and widely distribute these interview protocols so that everyone is aware of the types of questions that will be asked during visits. All three documents are available on line.

Test Administrators/Teachers:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/DOCS/NECAP/SchoolVisits/NECAP_Monitoring_Visit_Interview_Qs-School_Test_Administrators-Teachers.pdf

School Test Coordinators/Principals:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/DOCS/NECAP/SchoolVisits/NECAP_Monitoring_Visit_Interview_Qs-School_Test_Coordinators-Principals.pdf

District Test Coordinators:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/DOCS/NECAP/SchoolVisits/NECAP_Monitoring_Visit_Interview_Qs-District_Test_Coordinators.pdf

We ask you to submit your district testing schedules no later than Friday, **September 23**, so that RIDE staff members will be able to begin planning school visits during the scheduled times of testing. Each district is responsible for creating the testing schedule for all its schools so that each of the tested grades (3-8, 11) has the same testing schedule (e.g., all 3rd graders in the district are taking the mathematics test on the same day at the roughly the same time). Districts should take into consideration religious holidays and local events that may impact students' ability to participate. While districts may opt to schedule around these dates, it is important that ample time is incorporated into scheduling to allow time for make-up test sessions for those students who are absent for any reason (including absences for religious holidays) during regularly scheduled testing dates. Make-up testing may begin immediately following the scheduled administration of a test session. No student should be scheduled for a make-up session prior to the scheduled administration of that test session.

Please submit your testing schedules online, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/assessment/Schedule.aspx>,

using the pre-formatted form.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley, at 222-8494. Thank you.

RIDE offers NECAP science reporting workshops

Please see the following message from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

RIDE and Measured Progress will be conducting NECAP science results reporting workshops this month (see details below). All of the workshops will cover the same material, so there is no need to register for more than one. These workshops, which are designed for principals, superintendents, and any staff members who are directly involved with student data and analysis of results, will provide a review of the various NECAP reports and support materials as well as an overview of the NECAP Analysis and Reporting System (NARS).

In an effort to support schools in the use of NECAP science data, this year's workshops will also include useful information from the recent benchmarking of NECAP science items as well as a simple protocol that schools can use to analyze data.

Below are the dates, locations, and times of the upcoming face-to-face workshops:

- September 26, 1 – 3:30 p.m., at the Providence Marriott Downtown, 1 Orms St.
- September 27, 9 – 11:30 a.m., at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 801 Greenwich Ave., Warwick

To register for one of the face-to-face NECAP Science Reporting Workshops:

1. Go to <http://iregister.measuredprogress.org>.
2. Select “New England Common Assessment Program” from the drop-down menu and click on the “Enter” button.
3. Select the link for the site you want to register for and follow the online directions.

For those unable to attend one of the face-to-face workshops, we will also offer a webinar that will be posted on the RIDE Web site for future reference. The date and time of the planned webinar have yet to be determined; however, a notice will be sent out when these details have been finalized.

RIDE offers pre-recorded WebEx of fall NECAP test administrator/teacher workshop

Please see the following message from our Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum:

RIDE has posted a pre-recorded WebEx that is designed especially for teachers who administer the NECAP tests. This presentation provides important details associated with the administration of the grades 3 through 8 and 11 NECAP mathematics, reading, and writing tests, and it will also provide teachers with updates and answers to frequently asked questions. To access this presentation, please cut and paste the following link into your browser:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment/workshops.aspx>

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Kevon Tucker-Seeley (kevon.tucker-seeley@ride.ri.gov, 222-8494).

RIDE to distribute Safe Space Kits

Please see this notice from our Office of Student, Community, and Academic Supports:

As you may know, RIDE is dedicated to providing a safe learning environment for all students. To ensure that this commitment is maintained, RIDE is pleased to join with the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) to provide you with the a Safe Space Kit, which we will mail to you under separate cover. This valuable resource has been underwritten by a generous grant from the “Pepsi Refresh Challenge,” as part of the GLSEN nationwide campaign to build safe, inclusive schools and classrooms. In the coming weeks, we will also be providing these Safe Space Kits to principals in every middle school and high school. To learn more, please visit the GLSEN Web site, at:

www.safespacekit.com.

From the U.S. Department of Education:

From other state agencies:

PBS LearningMedia network open to all Rhode Island educators, students

Please see this message from Maria Velásquez, Rhode Island PBS Education Director:

Dear R.I. Educators & Administrators:

I would like to welcome you to America's largest classroom, PBS LearningMedia, a national network and a new next-generation, public-media education platform for PreK-16 classrooms. This digital-media platform is currently accessible to every district, every school, every teacher, and every student in the Rhode Island in time for the current school year. To create an individual account at no cost, please visit:

<http://ri.pbslearningmedia.org/>

Rhode Island PBS LearningMedia is a new digital-media platform that will help you re-invent classroom learning, transform teaching, and increase students' motivation, creativity, and engagement. It is a central stop and national network system offering supplemental curriculum-based content and online professional development through the integration of:

- the PBS Digital Learning Library; and
- the Teachers Domain content.

The site offers the "Latest RI Education News," a customizable station space that allows school districts' and individual schools' administrations to post special events and education happenings regarding Rhode Island education. For information on posting requirements, please call 473-7517, ext. 365.

I hope you enjoy this robust digital-learning resource!

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Commissioner/fieldmemos/default.aspx>